

"In this time of fiscal belt-tightening, it is important that we not lose sight of the fact that diplomacy and development are crucial to promoting stability, improving economies, and sustaining peace."

For Immediate Release: March 10, 2011

Contact: Matt Dennis 202-225-6506

Lowey Statement on FY2012 Budget Request for

U.S. Department of State

Congresswoman Nita Lowey (D-NY), Ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Subcommittee on State and Foreign Operations, today delivered the following opening statement at a hearing on the U.S. Department of State's Fiscal year 2012 budget request:

I join Chairwoman Granger in welcoming you back to our Subcommittee, Secretary Clinton. As always, it's an honor, and we thank you for your strong leadership. Your steady hand and effective representation of the United States never cease to impress me, especially during crises like those we face throughout Northern Africa and the Middle East.

In this time of fiscal belt-tightening, it is important that we not lose sight of the fact that diplomacy and development are crucial to promoting stability, improving economies, and sustaining peace. These investments help prevent threats to our national security and cost far less in lives and treasure than deployment of troops. We cannot let our current fiscal crisis create a future security crisis by cutting these invaluable programs.

That is why I am particularly pleased the President requested \$27 billion to support global development in Fiscal Year 2012. Assistance for addressing global climate change, food security, and health challenges helps to create the conditions in developing countries for the growth of democracy, economic expansion and ultimately increased stability.

In addition, this budget request would advance our security imperatives by bolstering counterdrug and anti-crime programs; combating transnational crime, terrorism, and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; strengthening our allies, including Israel, Jordan and Egypt; and providing assistance to prevent conflict in volatile regions. Humanitarian assistance for victims of natural disasters and conflict and aid to refugees and the internally displaced will encourage stability in vulnerable regions while meeting our moral obligations to help those most in need.

I am, however, troubled that this request does not prioritize basic education, an issue that I believe is crucial to the success of our efforts to promote health, economic development, gender equality, and long-term security. Over the last 10 years, I have worked to increase funding for basic education programs and, over that time, we have made significant progress. For example, in sub-Saharan Africa, enrollment in primary school has increased over 50%. However, despite our successes, more than 70 million children remain out of school, and I hope you will commit to me today to prioritizing our efforts in support of attaining universal primary education for all children by 2015.

I was particularly pleased that Prime Minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, emphasized the importance of education in the remarkable even you hosted commemorating International Women's Day at the State Department on Tuesday.

The current fiscal situation demands tough decisions, and this request reflects a thoughtful analysis of where cuts can be absorbed. I appreciate the care the Administration took to provide Congress with a realistic request. However, we know from the recent debate on the continuing resolution that several programs that you have included in your request are going to be subject to reductions in the House. One area of particular concern to me is the drastic cut to international family planning that was accompanied by divisive policy changes such as a reinstatement of the global gag rule. I hope that you can address what these cuts and policy changes would mean to the millions of women and families who depend on these programs.

Finally, we welcome your thoughts on the effect the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, the unrest

in Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Bahrain, Oman, and Jordan, and the new government in Lebanon will have on both our foreign policy and our aid to the region.

Thank you again for your service, and I look forward to your testimony.

###